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PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION MEMORANDUM



CHINESE
ROAD CONSTRUCTION
IN NORTHERN LAOS

NPIC/R-141/68
JANUARY 1969

GROUP 1 EXCLUDED FROM
AUTOMATIC DOWNGRADING
AND DECLASSIFICATION

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CHINESE ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN NORTHERN LAOS

Aerial photography of [REDACTED] reveals a new road under construction in northern Laos. The road joins the Chinese road network at the China/Laos border near Ban Botene and extends south toward Muong Sai. The new road is presently serviceable for trucks and construction vehicles to a point approximately 22 nautical miles (nm) inside Laos. Intermittent clearing operations extend an additional 8 nm southeast (Figure 1) along old Route 4 (now abandoned and overgrown). Approximately 125 buildings and tents are dispersed in numerous construction camps along the new route; vehicle sightings along the road have averaged between 30 and 40 on each of three missions flown during [REDACTED] (Figure 2).

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Numerous intelligence reports indicate that approximately 5,000 Chinese troops are constructing this two-lane, graded-earth road. Construction of the road, reportedly, will proceed southeastward along Route 4 to Muong Sai, then southwestward along abandoned Route 46, to terminate at Muong Houn. A branch road, which will connect Nam Tha with the new road at a point just south of Ban Botene, is also reported to be planned.

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FIGURE 1. GENERAL LOCATION MAP.

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FIGURE 2. MILITARY ACTIVITY ASSOCIATED WITH ROAD CONSTRUCTION, BAN BOTENE AREA, LAOS.

NPIC M-5410

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